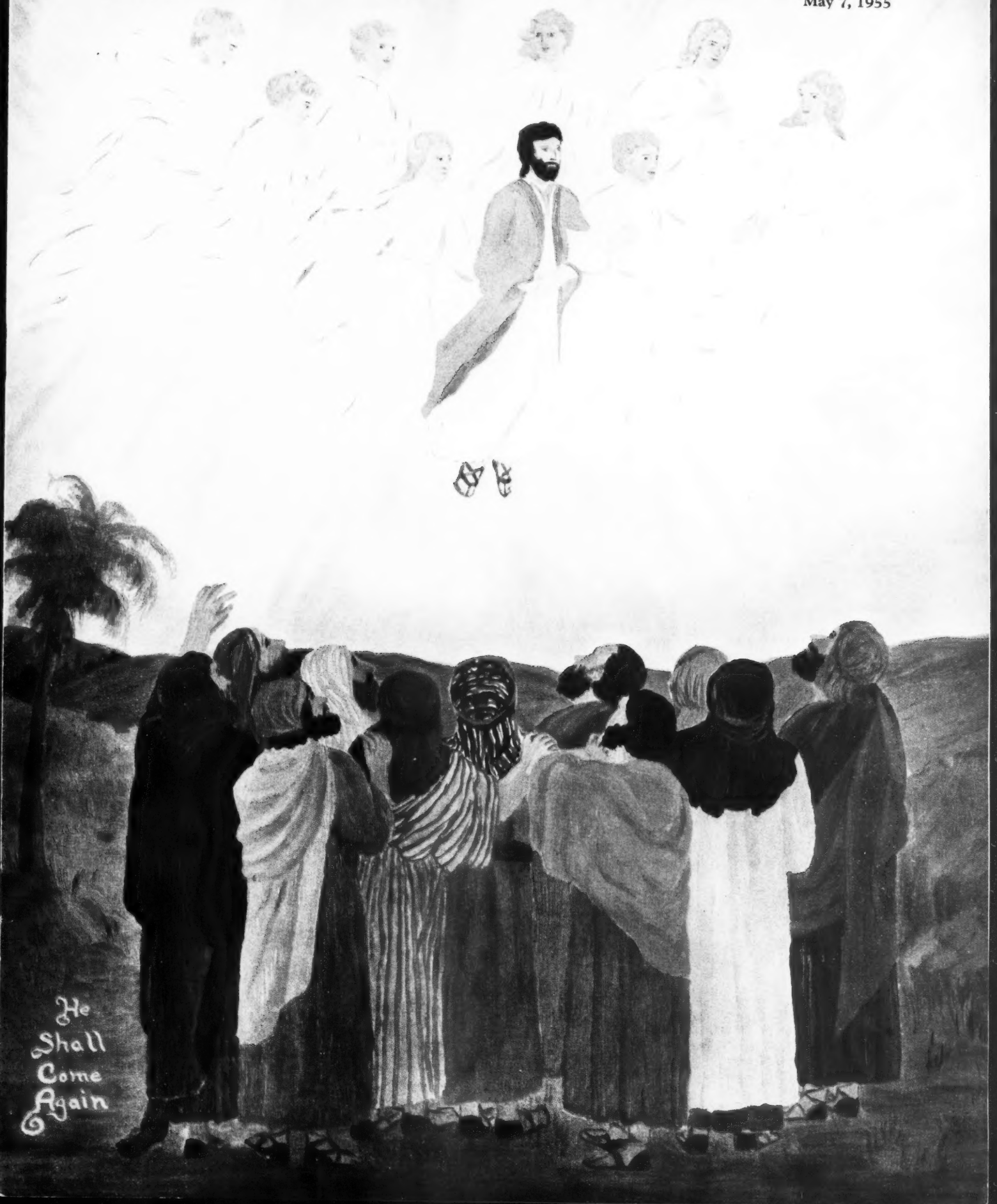


MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Vol. 42, No. 10

May 7, 1955



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DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

May 7, 1955

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THE ASCENSION

THE earthly career of Christ was extraordinary from the beginning to the very end. He was made in all points like His brethren, yet every phase of His life bears a high and elevating air. His was the great mission of personally demonstrating what the Creator would have of mankind. The first disclosure of His nature as a boy of only twelve, though overzealous, finds Him far advanced above the learned men. Even after three days of questioning in the Temple, His understanding and answers were still beyond their comprehension. Eighteen years of moral discipline and growth in God's wisdom fully prepared Him for the Messiahship.

Then came the famous Ministry. Though short, it was with a power that changed the course of history, for it was a commission from above. In doctrine He gave the world the wisdom of God that would lift them from the pagan level to such heights as to become heirs with Him in His Kingdom.

In the daily practice of godliness in His own life, His presence was of such beneficent effect that it could be noted of His disciples "that they had been with Jesus."

As He attended to the spiritual needs of the people by opening the blinded eyes to see, so also He healed their physical maladies. Miracles of divine power and mercy were wrought by Him in every section of Israel's land. The eyes of the blind were opened instantaneously; the paralytics walked; the dumb spake; the deaf heard. Even lepers were cleansed by His commanding power.

Three times death had to release its prey. A young girl and a young man, after physical death had claimed them, were restored to life. He stopped a funeral bier and turned weeping into the laughter of joy. One of His friends had been four days in the grave. He spoke the word, and the dead arose. Thousands had been fed by Him also in a miraculous way. Even the winds and the waves obeyed His word. In all these things He taught that there is a Power above all earthly powers. He made the moral and spiritual being the supreme end of life, and attained a moral stature that will ever remain the pinnacle of achievement to which humankind can aspire.

Three of His disciples saw Him in a startling vision of transfiguration. They heard a supernatural voice which declared Him to be the Son of God. They all knew their Master and teacher to be the promised Messiah, the son of David. What Peter voiced, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," was the conviction of each heart.

Then came the seeming tragedy. What He had predicted came to pass. He was apprehended by His own nation and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. He was unjustly condemned and nailed to the cross, where He died. He was buried by sorrowing disciples. But even in His death God used Him to teach us that there is a Power above all earthly powers. He arose from the dead the third day. After that He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs. He appeared in their meeting room. He walked and talked with them. He ate in their presence.

Then came the day of their last meeting. It had now been forty days since His resurrection. He led a group of His followers out from Jerusalem as far as Bethany which is on Mount Olivet. It was the farewell meeting. For the last time they looked on His face; for the last

time they heard His words; for the last time He gave them commands and promises. Then all at once He extended His hands in blessing, the hands where they still beheld marks of His erstwhile passion.

As Elisha when he followed Elijah his master knew that something was about to happen, that Elijah would leave him without knowing the manner of his departure, so these disciples knew that their Lord would be taken from them. They knew the hour had come when they were to be left leaderless.

"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:51). "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9).

Every known fact about the life of Christ shows the relationship of the Creator. His whole life theme points toward a higher life, onward, forward toward a better country, a better world. It seems singularly fitting that our last recollection of Him should be in this dramatic incident. It seems to tie our world more closely to the great celestial plan. For indeed we are to be a part of the heavenly family of God.

The unity of the Scriptures is shown in the fact that it was on Olivet that the ascension occurred. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11). It is stated in Zech. 14:4 with reference to the day of the Lord's return, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof . . . and there shall be a very great valley." Thus it seems especially significant that "He led them out as far as Bethany," for He "shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go": He shall return to the same mount. And it shall fittingly be the beginning of another great and "extraordinary" career of our Master on this earth.

But the disciples could not take their eyes off the spot where they had seen Him disappear. Their eyes were fixed on the heavens. And then they listened to the message of the two angels of His coming again from the same heavens, in like manner (Acts 1:10, 11). They were familiar with this promise, for He had often spoken to them about His return, when they would see Him once more.

They left the ascension mount filled with a joyous hope and a glorious anticipation. Their physical attitude as they had looked steadfastly toward heaven became the spiritual attitude of the Church, that of an upraised soul, an exalted attitude, a lifted life, to meet Him when the heavens should again part asunder to reveal their beloved Lord. His return became the flaming hope of the early Church, the all-absorbing objective of every believer through the ages. To see Him in His glory was the highest wish of the early Christians and of all Christians of succeeding ages who have retained the true hope of the Ascension: "THIS SAME JESUS, . . . SHALL SO COME."

"I WILL COME AGAIN"

AMONG the most comforting words to Christians of this day are those spoken by our Master just before His arrest: "I will come again." No words ever uttered by man have had such significance to God's people. The eleven Apostles who witnessed their Lord's majestic ascension were endued with new life as they heard the two angelic messengers confirm Jesus' words with: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The promise became the hope of the early Church. As the Church grew in numbers and as persecutions compelled them to flee to other localities, wherever they went they bore the Gospel tidings and with it the memorable words of Jesus, "I will come again."

So thrilled were they with the message of hope and so marvelous was its effect on their lives that the subject of the Lord's return was frequently on their lips. The Aramaic word "Maranatha," meaning "The Lord is coming," became their watchword. It was their greeting at meeting, farewell at parting, and their key word for admission to secret meetings. Building on this promise they faced the cruel world with an enviable radiance.

Does this present world need that radiance, that hope of the early Church? We answer emphatically in the affirmative. If ever men needed hope and courage instilled into them, it is today. Never in man's bewildering history has the world-scene been so full of foreboding evil as it is now. The political situation has never been worse or more gloomy. Two global wars, and numerous "little wars" with their ghastly hideousness have sown suffering, anguish and want to millions. Tyranny rules a vast portion of the earth. There is insecurity and dire distress among nations; jealousy and bickerings among classes; greed and restlessness among individuals. There is too much clutching after the things that crumble in the hands. Life faces the inevitable change and decay; its chances seem to be so haphazard. So much depends upon so little. Yet there is hope. Jesus said, "I will come again." Will the world not accept His message? Will they not listen?

The three Creeds—Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian—as formulated by the "Church Fathers," contain the sentiment that Christ shall come from heaven in glory to judge both the living and the dead. For years the return of Jesus was upheld even by churches which had otherwise apostatized. Today, by the vast majority the subject is scorned. To the churches who once believed it, the promise of the Second Coming now has become, as one writer put it, a "theological plaything."

Last year at the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Evanston, Ill., where "Christ, the Hope of the World," was the main theme of the discussion, few, precious few, were the voices that expressed the conviction of the Second Coming. George Goyder, a layman from England, courageously declared before that world assembly of churchmen the need of this conviction. He said in part: "Simple people all around the world are waiting for a simple declaration as to where this assembly stands on the question of the Second Coming. . . . What the world needs today is a Declaration of Dependence on God. . . . I believe we must preach the Second Coming."

It would have delighted us had the assembly unanimously adopted this recommendation and then acted upon it. But the opposition was too strong. Mr. Goyder was

quickly silenced by Messrs. "Bigs," and no further opportunity to voice one's opinion in this manner was granted. Impossible? We witnessed it!

Jesus' own testimony of Himself is priceless. He always spoke confidently of His return. In Matt. 24:42, 44, also Luke 12:37, He warns His followers to watch, to be ready, for the hour of His coming is unknown. "*When the Son of man cometh*" is perhaps the most familiar phrase of the Gospels*. Many of Jesus' Parables climax in that hour of destiny. There is the Parable of the Wedding Feast in which Christ, the King's Son, receives His bride; the Parable of the Talents in which the Lord returns to reckon with His servants; the Parable of the Ten Virgins in which the Bridegroom returns; the Parable of the Nobleman, going into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return, with the charge to His servants, "Occupy till I come." The New Testament ends with Jesus' own words, "Surely I come quickly."

Next to Jesus' own testimony the words of His closest associates are most trustworthy. We listen with confidence to men who heard Jesus' message and received His commission. When Paul gave instruction concerning the Lord's Supper, he said that in so doing "Ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (I Cor. 11:26). Jesus' coming was anticipated.

The reason for good works centered and culminated in the Second Advent. "Be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ." "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of . . . our Saviour Jesus Christ." "Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." "The trial of your faith" is to be rewarded with "praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:10; I Tim. 6:14; Titus 2:12, 13; James 4:8; I Peter 1:7).

The New Testament teaching is explicit that the early Church did not expect their reward until Christ should return. From Peter we have, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:4). From John, "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (I John 3:3). From Paul, "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time . . . unto salvation." "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 9:28; 10:37).

At this point Peter's prophetic testimony must not be overlooked. "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for . . . all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (II Pet. 3:3, 4). It is true, from time to time men have arisen and actually set the day and hour for Jesus' return. To some extent this has stimulated scoffings. But the same Apostle declares, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." It will come suddenly and unexpectedly to those scoffing and not watching. Of the times and seasons we are not ignorant, for the existing conditions of the day correspond to the prophecies for this time. The very fact that men are scoffing at this promise is one of the signs of the nearness of the event. (Continued on page 7)

* See Matt. 25:13; Mark 8:38; 13:26; Luke 18:8; 21:27.

The Herald, the King and the Kingdom

OF THE PROPHECIES relative to the return of Christ there is one which is to be of specific, spectacular fulfillment, destined to bring world-wide conviction. The last of the Prophets uttered it; Jesus Himself reiterated it. Said Malachi, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (4:5, 6).

A plain, direct declaration—Elijah the Prophet—not a church, not a class, not a message as proclaimed by our Adventist friends, but an *individual*, a *man*. It is the same stern, venerable hero of the stirring scene on Mount Carmel when the power of Baal *versus* the power of God was tested; the *man* who denounced King Ahab and pronounced upon him the curse of Jehovah; who uttered the death message to Ahaziah when he inquired of Baal to ascertain the issue of his illness. This grandest of the Hebrew Prophets who with characteristic suddenness was introduced to Israel, with characteristic suddenness made his departure. "For suddenly," reads Dr. Moffatt's version of the account of the closing moments of Elijah with his chosen successor, Elisha, "as they walked and talked, a chariot of fire with horses of fire drove between them, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." God's chariots were a cloud of angels, we learn from Ps. 104:3; 68:17.

Despite the clarity of Malachi's prophecy (4:5, 6) it has been wrested by some denominations to teach that it met fulfillment in John the Baptist. This misconception is quickly disproved by the fact that John stated emphatically three times that he was not Elijah. Furthermore Jesus, referring to the same event as Malachi, said, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things" (Matt. 17:11). That He was indicating some future event is most evident. John the Baptist had come, accomplished his mission and was dead and buried, having been beheaded by Herod quite some time prior to this prophecy.

As Jesus made His first advent, He had a first advent herald who was John the Baptist. As certain as He is to return or make a second advent, so certain is He to have a second advent herald—Elijah.

There is much meaning couched in Malachi's prophecy that Elijah shall come "before the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Christ's first coming was not before a "great and dreadful day." His second shall be. Will it not be a dreadful day for the wicked of earth when He comes with "righteousness as a breastplate," with "garments of vengeance for clothing," and "clad with zeal as a cloak," when "He will repay fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense"? "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun" (Isa. 59:17—19).

Malachi points to the same day as does Isaiah in chapter 61:1, 2. That "dreadful day," "the day of vengeance of our God" is yet to come. Jesus came in His mortal career as a lamb led to the slaughter. He will return as "the Lion of the tribe of Juda, . . . conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 5:5; 6:2).

The Greek Testament comments on Matthew 17:11, that the phrase "restore all things" signifies "to restore by bringing in a great moral reformation." Was ever this

world in such need of moral reformation as today? The crime statistics scream at us from every direction, of the night of immorality and vice that darkens the land, threatening every inhabitant thereof with stark terror.

For what an arousing this world is due when that Prophet startles the unsuspecting masses as he suddenly reappears to herald the coming King! Then shall follow the message of the age-lasting gospel, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come." When the King follows shortly, it shall be an advent known to all the world; not in secret, not in the desert or in the seclusion of the wilderness as has been by certain classes proclaimed: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27). What a spectacle of glory to behold as the Son of God rends the azure skies in His descent with "myriads of His holy ones" in train! Enoch, the seventh from Adam, proclaimed it some five millenniums ago (Jude 14) and it has been the Scripture-supported expectation of every true believer since.

Jesus Himself, prophesying of His return, says He will come to judge His servants, dividing them as sheep from the goats, on His right and on His left hand. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

The sheep, then, those who were willing to be led in all things by the Good Shepherd and have followed whithersoever He led, are the inheritors of the Kingdom.

One of the outstanding characteristics of sheep is meekness, that is why the followers of Jesus are so termed. He promised in His first sermon, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). When Christ comes the second time it is to clean up the earth and prepare it for their eternal inheritance and to fill it with His glory. This cleaning up is the work of the "hour" or forty years of judgments; and the thousand-year-reign of Christ and His co-rulers shall be for the glorification of the planet and development of a race of righteous subjects who shall be worthy of immortality to glorify their Maker through all eternity. This is the edict of the Eternal who decreed, "I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory" and "as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Isa. 46:10; Num. 14:21).

Emmanuel, King of kings, being a real, literal King, must needs rule over a real, literal Kingdom, the earth (Psalm 37:9, 11, 22, 29; Rev. 5:10), whereupon shall dwell teeming multitudes of real, literal subjects (Rev. 7:9, 15) governed by righteous and holy laws (Ezek. 43:12).

The Kingdom, also the coming of the King, was the faith and desire of the ancients, of Patriarch and Prophet. It was Jacob's expectation as he informed his sons before his death, "The scepter never passes from Judah, nor ever the staff of sway, till he comes into his own, and makes the clans obey" (Gen. 49:10, Moffatt). It was Balaam's prophecy to Israel in the wilderness: "A scepter shall arise out of Israel. . . . Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion" (Num. 24:17—19). The scepter and dominion signify rule and a people to be ruled.

Daniel, prophesying of the Kingdom, says: "And the
(Continued on page 7)

The Man Made in God's Image

THE entire religious world is taught to believe that the natural man is in the image of God, and, as an object of the Creator's handiwork, is "very good." The absurdity of such a theory is obvious, as a few comparisons between the natural man and God Almighty will demonstrate.

The Human Nature versus The Divine

Man possesses varying degrees of intellect, from the mental giants such as the late Einstein to the idiot who is incapable of coherent thought or connected speech; whereas with God are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). Which of these classes, physicist or fool, could justly be considered to be in the image of God?

Approaching from a physical standpoint the possibility of man being in the image of God, we are confronted with the giant and the dwarf. Which of these is in the express image of his Maker?

Further in the realm of the physical we find man to be afflicted with all manner of disease—cancer, heart disease, not to mention the newer diseases such as muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis—until his pain-racked frame can scarcely endure the suffering. Is God Almighty—Creator and Sustainer of the universe—beset with such physical infirmity? Can this be a specimen of His "very good" creation?

The moral record of an alarming percentage of our fellow humans is revealed in current crime statistics. It would be sacrilege to claim such creatures to be in the image of God, and "very good."

Comparing the life span of man and God we have on one hand a creature of the moment, fittingly likened to dust, a shadow, grass—the most perishable and fleeting of symbols; on the other hand we have the Being who inhabits Eternity, to whom a thousand years are as but a watch in the night (Ps. 90:4).

Man is subject to fatigue. God "fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isa. 40:28).

And thus we might continue *ad infinitum* contrasting the human nature with the divine. However, is not the foregoing sufficient to show that the natural man is not in the image of God?

The Scriptural Hope

A survey of the promises of Scripture makes doubly apparent the fact that man is not in the image of God. There we find oft-repeated assurances to the faithful of a future time when man shall at last be made, created, *changed* into God's image. We read that man shall be made equal unto the angels, to die no more; changed from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality (Luke 20:35, 36; I Cor. 15:53). Such a change would be neither possible nor necessary if man in his present state were in the image of God.

Amid all the difficulties of this mortal existence, a future change into the image of God was David's one sustaining hope. He said, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Ps. 17:15). Paul expressed the same hope, the realization of which he anticipated at the Second Advent of Christ "who shall change our vile [corruptible] body" (Phil. 3:20, 21). With quickened hope he exulted, "As we have borne the image of the earthy,

we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:49). If we are to bear "the image of the heavenly" in the future, assuredly we are not bearing it now. The beloved John cherished this same precious hope of a future change from mortality to immortality, for he said, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (I John 3:3).

If the promises of Holy Writ are reliable and if the hopes of such men as David, Paul and John were not a delusion, then it is certain that the reward to be bestowed at Christ's return is the only means by which man can possess the image of his Maker.

We have employed two means—a comparison of the human nature with the divine, and an examination of Scriptural promises pertaining to a future change to immortality—to show that the natural man is not in the image of God. Now we shall delve deeper into the Book to secure, if we may, a detailed description of a man—not the natural—who is in this present day of salvation being fashioned into the *mental* and *moral* image of his Maker.

Of Whom is This Man Composed?

Genesis 1:26 is the text upon which the religious world have constructed the false premise. Let us read it analytically. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion." Immediately the plurality of this man is revealed. "Man" is made; dominion is given to "them." At once this eliminates the natural man from the focus of discussion and directs our attention to a multitudinous body, many in one, "them."

Colossians 1:18 gives clear definition to this "them." "He is the head of the body, the church"—many members, but one body (Rom. 12:5). Christ is the Head of the man made in God's image and the Church forms His mystical body.

There is no racial or social discrimination with the Almighty. Members of the Church are selected from every nation, the only stipulation being that they fear God and work righteousness (Acts 10:34, 35). That Gentiles ("the nations at large as distinguished from the Jews," Webster) as well as Jews enter into the composition of the man made in God's image, we find by reading Eph. 2:14, 15. Weymouth's translation which makes this passage more comprehensive is as follows, "He is our peace—He who has made Jew and Gentile one, and . . . has broken down the hostile dividing wall, by setting aside the Law with its commandments, . . . His design was to unite the two sections of humanity in Himself so as to form one new man, thus effecting peace, and to reconcile Jew and Gentile in one body to God." By abolishing the Mosaic Law, Christ broke down "the hostile dividing wall" which separated Jew and Gentile believers, making it possible for all to be unified members of His body.

That the members for Christ's body are selected from humanity at large is implied in Genesis 2:7, which reads, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." Religious leaders have misconstrued this text to signify that the Almighty (so hard pressed was He for material), took the actual dust of the ground—mud!—to form the first man. Such speculation is so preposterous as to be undeserving of our time, even for ridicule. Stating briefly and simply the facts concerning Gen. 2:7,

we have from Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon that "dust expresses the lowness and fragility of human nature." From frail humanity the Almighty is selecting men and women to form *the man*, the body of Christ.

In his Letter to the Corinthians, Paul noted the similarities of the natural and mystical bodies. He said, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. 12: 12, 27). As all members of the natural body are governed by one head, the same principle applies in the body of Christ: He is Head of the Church. The true members move only at His direction and not according to personal desires; they are impelled by His mind and not individual impulse.

How is This Man Developed?

Men and women, when selected from the raw material of mankind as prospective members of the man made in the image of God, possess the ordinary weaknesses and propensities to which flesh is heir. By nature they are not "very good."

Our text under discussion, you will remember, states, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." A superior quality, in fact a superlative quality of mental, moral and physical excellence is implied.

Men and women whose aspiration is to be a part of the man made in God's image must subject themselves to a program of rigorous development. Three steps are required.

FIRST: They must become mentally like God by discarding all theological error and believing only the truth of the Word.

SECOND: They must become morally like God by a cessation from all evil and an actual performing of all His commandments, who decreed, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Pet. 1: 16).

THIRD: Taking steps one and two renders them eligible for the third step, the physical change into the image of God. This step is beyond the power of frail man to accomplish. It is the reward—immortality—to be bestowed by Christ at His Second Advent to all members of His body.

In addition to his own personal effort, every member of the man made in the image of God is dependent for his development upon aid from many sources, both human and divine. The divine form of aid is expressed in our key text: "Let us make man." The original word translated "us" is *elohim*, defined in Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon as "angels." Angels aid immeasurably toward the development of the man. Through their *guidance* everyone who "will do his will" (John 7: 17) is sought out and instructed; through their *protection* man's life span is prolonged until he has had time and opportunity to perfect his character (I Tim. 4: 8; Ps. 34: 7; Heb. 1: 14).

A vital human form of aid, divinely provided, is described in Eph. 4: 11—15. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Although in this age we do not have Apostles and Prophets (and must rely upon their written words), yet we are not deprived of pastors and teachers. Their purpose? "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of

Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, . . . but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Here is seen the full growth of the man, from childhood instability to matured adulthood—"the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." By expanding our moral stature to the towering height of the Christ-life until we are armed with His mind, is the only means by which we can identify ourselves as members of His body. God makes no impossible demands of man. It is a comfort to realize that from the smallness and the pettiness of our natural selves we can grow into such greatness of soul as to be recognized as having attained "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

Further in this chapter is a key verse to clarify our subject, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation [manner of life] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (vs. 22—24). This man now in the process of development is not made of putty or mud, but is "created in *righteousness* and *true holiness*." Only those who conform their lives to these specifications form a part of the man of Genesis 1: 26.

The executing of this command to be "created in righteousness and true holiness" is the work of a lifetime. Righteousness! The term implies unswerving rectitude, steadfast conformity of life to divine law. True holiness! The very phrase is a denunciation of all false holiness, that which is hypocritical, pretended. Holiness to be acceptable on High must be the spontaneous, voluntary expression of a sincere heart which overflows with noble desire. Heart holiness expels from one's life all the works of the flesh. It brings blessed relief from such disagreeable traits as irritability, discontent, jealousy, rivalry. In the final analysis at Judgment, "righteousness and true holiness" are the characteristics which will distinguish God's perfect man from all others.

The Change to Immortality

When the last member of this body, the Church, the mystical man, has completed his mental and moral growth, Christ will return and "change our vile [corruptible] body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are *changed into the same image* from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (Phil. 3: 20, 21; II Cor. 3: 18). Then "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality" shall the Church raise their majestic anthem of triumph, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (I Cor. 15: 54, 55). Then shall the Church be endowed with a vigor of constitution that shall never decline, a strength of intellect that shall never weaken, a beauty that shall never fade, and life that shall never end.

Then, and not until then, shall the man of Genesis be in the image of God and ready for dominion, which will be discussed in Series Nine of *The First Three Chapters of Genesis* to appear in our next issue under the topic,

THE MAN OF GENESIS RECEIVES DOMINION

The Escape

SODOM was one of the fairest cities of the Jordan valley, set in a plain which was "as the garden of the Lord" in its fertility and beauty. Here the luxuriant vegetation of the tropics flourished. Here was the home of the palm tree, the olive, and the vine. Rich harvests clothed the fields, and flocks and herds covered the encircling hills, while art and commerce contributed to enrich the proud city of the plain. The treasures of the East adorned her palaces, and the caravans of the desert brought their stores of precious wares to supply her marts of trade. Every want of life was easily supplied, and the whole year seemed one round of festivity.

The profusion reigning everywhere gave birth to luxury and pride, while the love of pleasure was fostered by wealth and leisure. Their useless, idle life made the inhabitants a prey to sin, thus defying the Great Eternal. Though they had before them the example of the antediluvian world and knew how the judgments of God had been manifested in its destruction, yet they openly defied God and His laws, delighting in deeds of violence.

And now the last night of Sodom was approaching; but men perceived it not. The pleasure-seeking throngs were passing to and fro, intent upon the enjoyment of the hour.

In the twilight two strangers drew near to the city gate. Lot, an inhabitant of Sodom, was sitting at the gate as the travelers approached, and upon observing them he rose from his place to meet them. Bowing in a humble, courteous manner, he said, "Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night." But they said, "Nay; but we will abide in the street all night." However, as Lot pressed them they accepted his hospitality and entered his house. But before they had retired for the night a lawless crowd gathered about the house, seeking the two strangers.

Lot went out to try the effect of persuasion upon them, but his words were like oil upon flames, and their rage became like the roaring of a tempest. The crowd rushed upon him and would have had no mercy upon his life, but the angels—for such were his guests—rescued him. Putting forth their hands they drew Lot into the house, then smote the crowd with blindness so that it wearied them to find the door.

The angels now revealed to Lot the object of their mission. They said, "We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it."

The two strangers whom Lot had endeavored to protect now promised to protect him and any of his family who would heed the warning words. Lot went to his sons-in-law who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city." But he seemed to them as one that mocked.

And when the morning arose, the angels hastened Lot to take his wife and two daughters and depart from the wicked city, lest they be consumed. In all the cities of the plain even ten righteous persons had not been found, but the one man who feared God was snatched from destruction. Hesitancy or delay now would be fatal. The command was given with startling vehemence, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

The overthrow was delayed only to give the fugitives time to escape. Their steps across the plain were counting out the last moments of the doomed city. No sooner

had Lot reached safety than the Lord rained brimstone and fire upon the cities of the beautiful plain.

But, while hastening away from Sodom, Lot's wife ventured to cast a look backward to the doomed city. It was a fatal look; it had no reward of gratification. All she saw were the leaping flames from the burning city—the smoke rising in billows. Sodom, beautiful Sodom, was gone and all its inmates; the old life was no more. And she had forfeited the future by her disobedience to the stern command, "Look not behind thee."

As she looked, her senses grew numb, her form became lifeless and petrified. On the plain her body remained—a monument of the certainty of God's judgments. As her heart did cling to Sodom, so she perished with it.

When she opens her eyes again it will be to view the messenger of God calling her to account—yes, to account for that backward look, to account for her unfinished work, her uncurbed affections, her lifelong compromising with sin. She had played upon the long suffering of God to her own destruction. She *wanted* eternal life; she had always believed she would get it. But no, that reward shall never be hers. Instead of strengthening her faith against the hour of testing, all her life she had been preparing herself for that backward look—building up her weakness, her instability, her inordinate affections. The test she was given upon the plains of Sodom revealed her true character, her double life, revealed that it is impossible to throw off years of habit in a moment, and to be consistently what we never have been.

It is particularly for us that these events have been recorded. It was for us that Jesus uttered those words, "Likewise as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." He concluded His warning with the solemn charge, "Remember Lot's wife."

Fittingly, this present evil world may be described as Sodom. Well will it be for us if *we* are strengthening our faith, fortifying our power mightily to stand every test. When God's judgments are poured upon the earth, our escape will depend upon what we are doing right now in our everyday life.

Woe unto us if we set our feet toward the mountains and our heart remains in the lowlands!

Brave souls like to that of Lot press steadily on though life's treasures and earth's closest companions be severed.

Up! escape! Press on . . . on! The angel is by our side! naught else matters. The heavenly City is before us. There rest awaits, rest when we have traveled as far as mortal strength permits; sweet rest and peace after the storm, calm after the turmoil. Before us there is breaking in all its splendor a new day; it is the dawning of Eternity! Through God's mercy may we be one to share in that grand escape.

Lord, the newness of this day
Calls me to an untried way.
Let me gently take the road,
Give me strength to bear my load,
Thou my Guide and Helper be—
I will travel through with Thee. —Sel.

WATCH, CHRISTIAN, WATCH!

"WHAT I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," was spoken by no less a Personage than our blessed Lord. In army life a man found sleeping on guard pays the penalty of death. A man who enters the Army of the Lord can rest assured that if he neglects his duty and service by sleeping his time away as the enemy lurks near, he will pay a greater penalty. The Prophet says, "I will stand upon my watch," not sit down or lie down and go to sleep while on the watch. A good watchman is one with a keen vision and, beholding the enemy at a distance, sounds the alarm "To arms!" before the enemy has taken advantage. As soldiers of the Great Commander, we too often have been sleeping and try to arouse ourselves when the damage had already been inflicted.

"Blessed," yes, "blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." How oft we have deceived ourselves, thinking we were watching when our eyes were blinded to our own faults, ways, sayings, thinkings and doings. Peter said unto the Lord, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." Even then it took the strike of the bell on that fatal morning when his Master was led away, to convince him that he was deceived. If we wait until the sound of the final bell, it will be too late for us to come over from the enemy's side. There will be bitter sorrow.

There is plenty of watching, but not to see what the Lord will say; plenty of watching to see how the old man can be carefully protected and covered up and taken care of, plenty of watching to see if we might gain some advantage over our fellow men, plenty of watching to see whether or not things are working our way. Perhaps we are watching to be ready to justify ourselves before men.

Then there is the watching that pleases the Lord. "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." The beloved Paul commanded his son Timothy not only to watch in one, two, three or four things but "watch thou in all things." Gideon chose only those who would be fit to destroy the enemy, those who would watch as they drank. The rest were turned back, unqualified for use. "Let us watch and be sober," said Paul, indicating that only a sober man will always be found watching.

In the closing hours of Jesus' life, they came to a place called Gethsemane, "and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. . . . My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch." Then He went forward a little and prayed. After sweet communion with the Father, He returned to find His disciples asleep and to Peter He said, "Couldst not thou watch one hour?"

There is a deep spiritual lesson in it for us. We have entered the garden together—the garden of the Lord—to watch with Him for one short hour in this night of darkness. We have promised to go down with Him to death to sin. Our Master bore the cross so bravely. Let us ask ourselves the question, "Shall we as disciples of the Lord fall asleep in this short, brief time with the enemy so close at hand and the multitude without the gates?" Jesus said, "The spirit . . . is willing, but the flesh is weak," better translated, "The spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak." The spirit of Truth will always keep us awake, if we only let it; but our own natural ways will put us to sleep, not only through the brief hour when our brethren are under trial, but will put us to sleep for a long eternity. Let us watch for all that is good, but close our eyes to all that is evil.

THE HERALD, THE KING AND THE KINGDOM

(Continued from page 3)

kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (7:27). This text teaches the extent and duration of the Kingdom—world-wide and everlasting; and with Ps. 149:9 makes clear that it is to be ruled by Christ with His saints.

The Kingdom was the theme of Jesus' ministry, as we read in Luke 8:1, "He went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God." It was the keynote of His post-resurrection message, during His last forty days on earth. The Kingdom was the testimony of the twelve Apostles (Luke 9:2), and the Revelation to John on Patmos. He was permitted a glimpse of the glory and majesty of that Kingdom for which we must work and wait. He heard the voice of the seventh angel as he sounded forth the triumphant shout, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

The fully glorified Kingdom of Christ when the earth rolls forth at the end of the thousand-year reign of the Son of God and His 144,000 co-rulers, is the culmination of God's plan of salvation on this planet. It is the purpose for which the earth was created. The Prophet Isaiah testified, "He formed it to be inhabited" (45:17, 18), not by sinful men but by righteous men and women, beings worthy of perpetuation in that eternal realm.

"I WILL COME AGAIN"

(Continued from page 2)

There never was a time when so many have had a "form of godliness" and then laughed at the real thing, as today. More and more the churches are turning to pleasures. Jesus said no one can know the day and hour of His return, but He also said "when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the door" (Matt. 24:33).

In this age of scientific advancement men look for confidence, but they get fear; they want continued progress, but are faced with the dreadful thought of world destruction. Christ alone has the answer and the power to right earth's wrongs, to bring about a state of peace and life eternal to His people. Though the world deny His coming now, and will resist violently when He comes to claim His rightful throne, He will, nevertheless, triumph victoriously as truly as the Prophet said: "The Lord shall be King over all the earth" (Zech. 14:9). Then shall men be at peace and all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest and worship Him who many centuries ago said: "I will come again."

Notice

This special issue of THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE features our Lord's Ascension, and the hope which it engenders deep within the heart of every believer—that of His Second Coming.

Additional copies are available at five cents each.

Meditations On the Word

"In everything ye are enriched by him" (I Cor. 1:5).

Of all the men who have left "footprints on the sands of time" none compare with Jesus of Nazareth. He was born into the world with the same nature as other men, but none lived a life of unsurpassed purity and devotion to the Father's will as He. Others died for their faith as He died, but while they still sleep in death Jesus rose from the dead the third day, walked and talked with His disciples for forty days and then ascended to Heaven, promising to return at the appointed hour.

Individuals who have come under the influence of this noble Personage have acquired new meaning and significance in their own lives. They have been met with a challenge: to live and conquer as He did, to overcome the world as He overcame. In everything their lives were affected for the better. They were enriched.

Many have uttered the exclamation, "Oh, to be rich!" Perhaps we ourselves have said as much as we imagined the things we could have and the things we could do, were such the case. Many have their own clear idea of the things which enrich life. Upon being questioned they would mention money, and the things it could buy, power, position, security, comfort, knowledge, art, sport, and many other things which supposedly bring satisfaction.

It is difficult for men to learn that physical achievements are not the factors that determine the well-being of individuals, neither does intellectual attainment; but in proportion as a man devotes His life in service and sacrifice for God and his fellow man does he become rich in the things of eternal value. An abundance of material things often brings more sorrow than happiness, and they also are known to disappear suddenly. Of Jesus it is said, "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." He gave up willingly the things that could have been His in this life. We cannot realize how many lives have been benefited and enriched by His work and example.

Man is a being for whom food, drink, raiment, and the numerous enjoyments of life are not sufficient. These do not give true enrichment. He is created for better—spiritual—things. Were a man who is literally rich, well dressed, healthy, yet who seeks not the Lord's righteousness, to behold his true self as he stood before a mirror, he would see, not the fine-appearing man he imagines himself to be, but a poor, wretched and naked form, barely able to stand upright. Was not this Jesus' warning to the church at Laodicea? "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: . . ." (Rev. 3:18).

An understanding of the background of the Corinthian Christians causes us to realize better what Paul had in mind when he reminded them that in everything they were enriched by Christ. Through the knowledge of Christ and His saving Word they were freed from their hopeless and godless condition in the world. They had been pagans, living an obscure life, in bondage to every sin. To have the gospel of Christ brought to them, to know of a God all-powerful whose children they could become, and

to learn they could be joint-heirs with Christ, was to them an exciting and enriching experience.

They now belonged to a brotherhood which had dignity, recognition, and value in the sight of God. A completely new outlook for life was given them, and the vision of life evermore in the Kingdom of Christ was sufficient to cause them to change from the old to the new.

In Christ they experienced an entirely new fellowship. Rich or poor, bond or free, all were as one, devoted to one purpose, one King. No boundaries separated nations or races, all were brethren. Though many of them were slaves and could never change their status, now they could work to be God's free men and join in the affairs of the Church as equals.

In some respects we may consider our condition far above that of the Corinthians. We live in a land of freedom; we enjoy the liberty to choose or change our occupation; our nation is "Christian." But in reality, unless we are enlightened by the precepts of the Master we are without hope and God in the world. Mere profession to know God, or having a form of religion, does not always mean that we are genuine followers of Christ.

Everyone who has been enlightened by the Light of Truth in these latter days and makes a sincere attempt to walk in its light, is enriched beyond measure. What earthly attainment can compare with the satisfaction of finding one's way after long groping in darkness?

It should be obvious that much enrichment of life within the Way comes through personal relationship. Persons influence others with whom they associate. There is unlimited possibility for human enrichment in fellowship when it is inspired by true faith and high ideals. Whether in families, communities or the larger life of the world, people who know how to live together reap a rich reward. So often the best things are kept from those who do not learn to love and to share.

Jesus and His Apostles often indicated that those who lived but for the present, who ate, drank, and went about their duties with no particular purpose, were as though dead. Those individuals are most enriched who have high purposes inspired of God and when governed by such aims; they find riches which the world can neither give nor take away.

When Paul enumerated to the Galatian brethren the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), he revealed some of the enrichments of the Christian life. Consider the blessed inner state of the soul that makes love its life aim and banishes every trace of hate; that finds joy in every duty and obligation to God and man; that is peaceful through the storms which buffet; that is patient whatever the provocation; that practices the art of being kind; that is generous for good with the trust given him of God; that is honest and faithful in thought, speech and act; that can adapt its life to any circumstance for Christ's sake; and, finally, that lets Christian motives control the inner self.

Anyone can share this enrichment if he is wise and humble enough to accept the Word of God for his standard of conduct and be governed by it through every circumstance of life.



Divine Certitudes

TREES are budding into leaf, flowers unfolding to light, birds waking the days with their most enchanting melody, lambkins dancing upon the countrysides in sheer delight. In field and garden eager eyes discern the first blades of emerald green shooting forth in response to the warm rays of the sun.

It is God's glorious Springtime!

For generations uncounted this miracle of nature has never ceased to repeat itself. Could we call our fathers or our fathers' fathers to witness, all would testify in one unanimous voice that they never saw a winter which did not have its spring.

This order of the seasons—rhythmic as the beating of a drum, regular as the breaking of ocean waves against the strand—holds high significance. It is the confirmation of a covenant made some four millenniums ago. When the flood waters abated, God Almighty gave His pledge to Noah that while the earth remained, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, should not cease (Gen. 8:22). Since that distant day, some four thousand times mankind has witnessed that pledge confirmed.

Not only are we to recognize the rotation of the seasons as the confirmation of a divine covenant, but the Great Eternal calls upon us to accept budding springtime and golden harvest as a token that every promise upon the Sacred Page shall likewise be fulfilled with the same invariable precision.

He declares, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not

thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10, 11).

The word of His mouth, proclaimed by Prophets, corroborated by Jesus, verified by angels on Olivet, and echoed by Apostles, is "*Behold he cometh.*" The scrolls of the Prophets are radiant with this Messianic hope; it is the throbbing theme of the Gospels; the Revelation of Jesus Christ is vibrant with the same ringing note, "Surely I come quickly."

The cycle of the seasons is our guarantee, signed with God's immortal signature. Whoever saw a winter without a spring; whoever saw a seedtime without a harvest? They only have reason to doubt the Second Advent.

These are DIVINE CERTITUDES!

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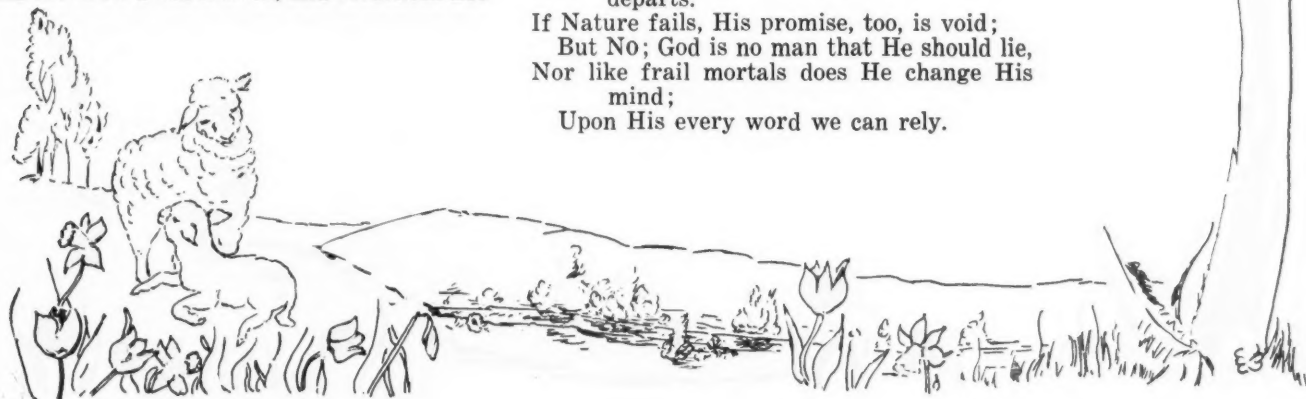
I never see a tree bud into leaf,
Or watch a daffodil unfold to light,
Or feel the heat of summer's noonday sun
That brings full soon the golden harvest
ripe,

I never watch the seasons rhythmic flight
Without rememb'ring in my heart of hearts
The edict from on High: THE LORD SHALL
COME!

Creation speaks the word—and doubt
departs.

If Nature fails, His promise, too, is void;
But No; God is no man that He should lie,
Nor like frail mortals does He change His
mind;

Upon His every word we can rely.



THE KING

Psalm 72

With all the clash of battle
Which round the earth doth ring;
'Tis strange we hear so little
Of bringing back "The King!"

Though once on earth rejected
He will to earth return
To right all wrong with justice;
For this our spirits yearn.

The whole creation groaneth!
O Lord, Thy comfort bring!
Cast out the prince of this world
And give us back "The King!"

Give peace unto Jerusalem!
Therein set up Thy Throne!
Restore joy to Thy people
And bid them cease to roam.

Answer the prayer of David,
The son of Jesse, Lord!
And give Thy King Thy judgments,
According to Thy Word.

His judgments shall be righteous;
Then will the people find
A just and perfect Ruler
For earth, and all mankind.

He'll judge the poor with justice;
And for the children care,
By crushing their oppressors,
Who did to hurt them dare.

From base deceit and violence
He will their souls release;
Give joy in place of mourning,
And bid all war to cease.

He shall descend like showers
With blessings in their train;
And righteousness shall flourish
Throughout His peaceful reign.

For He shall have dominion
On earth from sea to sea:
And every king and people
To Him shall bow the knee!

His name endures for ever!
And all the world shall see
God's great and matchless Glory!
Amen! So let it be!

—*Sel. and alt.*